

Contract Spaces in Veterinary Science and Optometry

What is the Kentucky Contract Spaces Program?

The contract spaces program provides Kentucky students with access to training in veterinary science and optometry at partner universities outside the state. The partnership arrangements, which are facilitated through a regional compact of southern states, allow Kentuckians access to high-quality, high-cost professional education at minimal cost to the Commonwealth. It is an excellent example of resource sharing through interstate collaboration.

How many Kentucky students are served by the program?

This year 144 Kentucky students attended veterinary school through the contract spaces program. Thirty-six of those were first-year students. The vast majority (136) of those students attended Auburn University in Alabama, while eight students attended the Tuskegee Institute. Kentucky contracted for 44 optometry spaces at three institutions: the Southern College of Optometry in Tennessee, the University of Alabama, and Indiana University.

How does the program work?

A fixed number of spaces for Kentucky students is reserved at each participating university, and students selected to enroll in these programs are required to pay only the in-state tuition at the host institution. The Commonwealth pays a contract fee to the universities to reserve the spaces and cover the balance of the students' educational costs. Kentucky-based optometry and veterinary science advisory groups aid in the selection of students.

What is the Council's request?

The Council on Postsecondary Education seeks an additional \$586,800 of recurring funds in FY 2006-07 and an additional \$335,500 of recurring funds in FY 2007-08 to cover program cost increases, expand the number of optometry spaces, and replace nonrecurring funds that supported the program in the last biennium. Current funding for the program is \$3,516,200 (FY 2005-06).

Why is the additional funding needed?

The Council estimates that 28 veterinary spaces would have to be eliminated in the 2006-08 biennium if funding is not increased. This would cut the number of contract spaces in veterinary science by 8.8 percent. Similarly in optometry, 19 spaces would have to be eliminated over the next biennium if funding is not increased.



Photo source: UK

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